

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350

My dear Mr. Speaker:

There is enclosed a draft of proposed legislation "To amend title 10, United States Code, to provide gold star lapel buttons for the next of kin of members of the armed forces who lost or lose their lives in war or as a result of cold war incidents."

This proposal is a part of the Department of Defense Legislative Program for the 89th Congress and the Bureau of the Budget advises that, from the standpoint of the Administration's program, there is no objection to the presentation of this proposal for the consideration of the Congress. The Department of the Navy has been designated as the representative of the Department of Defense for this legislation. It is recommended that this proposal be enacted by the Congress.

Purpose of the Legislation

This proposal would amend title 10 of the United States Code to incorporate the provisions of the Act of August 1, 1947 (61 Stat. 710), as amended (36 U.S.C. 182a - 182d), and to broaden those provisions by authorizing gold star lapel buttons for the next of kin of members of the armed forces who, after June 30, 1958, died or die as a result of cold war incidents.

The Act of August 1, 1947, as amended (36 U.S.C. 182a - d) provides that a gold star lapel button shall be furnished to widows, parents, and next of kin of members of the armed forces of the United States who lost or lose their lives during World War I, World War II, or any subsequent war or period of armed hostilities in which the United States may be engaged. This is included in the present proposal, except that for deaths after June 30, 1958, the requirement that the deaths occur during a period of armed hostilities is eliminated. The present proposal provides instead that the widows, parents, and next of kin of members who lost or lose their lives after June 30, 1958, will be eligible for the gold star lapel button if death occurs while the member was engaged in a cold war action or operation. The criteria proposed for determining the circumstances of service that establish eligibility for the lapel button are consistent with those announced by the President in Executive Order 11016, approved April 25, 1962, for the award of the Purple Heart, and in Executive Order 11046, approved August 24, 1962, for award of the Bronze Star Medal. These criteria are also similar to those established in the Act of July 25, 1963, Pub. L. 88-77 (77Stat.93).

AN IDENTICAL LETTER WAS FORWARDED THIS DATE TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

When areas of the world are in fact theaters of armed hostility and commitments of the United States require the presence there of our armed forces in various capacities, members killed by hostile acts while meeting those commitments for their country have made the same supreme sacrifice required of so many during war. "Cold war" casualties resulting from hostile acts are entitled to the same recognition as wartime casualties and their next of kin should be entitled to display the gold star lapel button which signifies the supreme sacrifice made for this nation.

Authorization for the "cold war" lapel button is made retroactive to July 1, 1958, the official date for the beginning of the Vietnam operation and the date established by Executive Order 10977 for initial award of the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have designated eight military operations in which United States units participated after July 1, 1958, or are participating, that involved encountering foreign armed opposition or being in a position where hostile action was imminent. Members of the participating military units in these eight operations are entitled to the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal. It is believed the next of kin of members who were killed during those eight operations are as much entitled to the gold star lapel button as those next of kin who may become entitled to it if this proposal is enacted.

Cost and Budget Data

There would be no increase in the budgetary requirements of the Department of Defense by the enactment of this proposal.

Sincerely yours,

Honorable John W. McCormack  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

1 Enclosure  
Draft Bill